



Can You Picture Your Future?

WYNNER Newsletter February 2019



High Country resident and world-renowned photographer, Scott Pearson, visited WYN last month to share his story and his photos with our after school youth.

"I got started with photography by taking pictures under water. I didn't have any formal training but I loved capturing that ocean world that no one got to see. What about you all? What do you love that you would want to take pictures of?" Scott asked as he began his presentation to our kids.

Our youth's response to his question was immediate and enthusiastic.

"My house!"

"Fashion!"

"Landscape photography!"

"Animals!"

Scott continued. He told them about his journey to become a photographer when others told him he couldn't make it. He showed them picture after exciting picture of the beautiful places

- both domestic and international - he has been with his camera. He pulled their imaginations into stories of swimming with dolphins and running from lions. **But most of all, he invited our WYN students to imagine new futures for themselves, futures they might never have pictured (pun intended) otherwise.** He reminded them that they have immense potential and that their futures are bright if they follow their dreams.

Thank you, Scott, for your inspirational and adventurous stories!

To learn more about Scott's work, visit his websites:

<https://www.scottpearsonphoto.com/>

<https://www.scottpearsonnaturephotography.com/>

A Safe, Quiet Place for Our Kids



With the help of our incredible community of supporters - board members, local student volunteers, and generous donors - we have created a special new space for our after school students. With soft lighting, warm paint, green plants, cozy seating and a friendly little bunny, **we have transformed an old storage room into a new safe haven.** We call it the "chill room." Now, when our students find themselves struggling to control their behavior, whether due to anger, or anxiety or frustration, they have a space to step away and calm down.



This little bunny's name is Pocket. She is the newest member of the WYN family! Pocket is a soft and friendly companion for our kids.

WYN's after school program strives to equip our students with the skills to succeed personally as well as academically. **Healthy coping strategies, behavior management and self-control are three critical life skills we seek to teach our middle school students.** It is our hope that this "chill room" will not only help our youth find peace in the moment but will help them discover practices for coping with future difficult situations.

Thank you to everyone who played a part in making this wonderful new room a reality!



WYN was so grateful to receive a generous grant from the Blue Ridge Electric Members Foundation to expand our mentoring program. WYN's Executive Director, Jennifer Warren, is pictured above at the grant awards ceremony last month. We can't wait to put the funds to use connecting more local youth to positive and supportive role models.

The Impacts of Trauma: the science behind WYN's work

"Ensuring that young children have safe, secure environments in which to grow and learn creates a strong foundation for both their futures and a thriving, prosperous society. Science shows that early exposure to maltreatment or neglect can disrupt healthy development and have lifelong consequences. When adult responses to children are unreliable, inappropriate, or simply absent, developing brain circuits can be disrupted, affecting how children learn, solve problems, and relate to others."

Watch a video and read more from Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child when you [click here](#)

Fear and Anxiety Affect the Brain Architecture of Learning and Memory

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

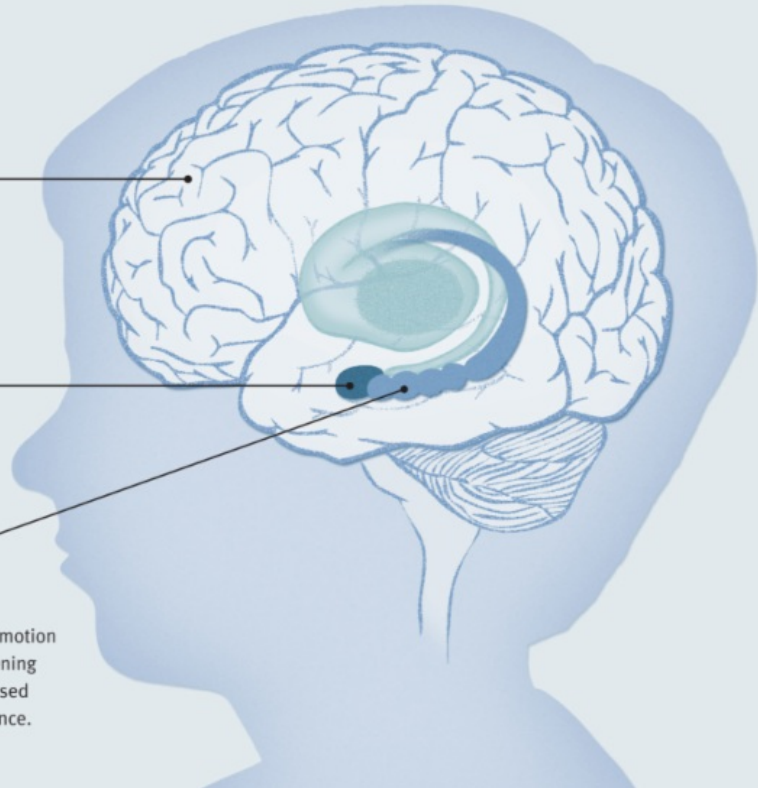
Center of executive functions; regulates thought, emotions, and actions. Especially vulnerable to elevation of brain chemicals caused by stress. Matures later in childhood.

AMYGDALA

Triggers emotional responses; detects whether a stimulus is threatening. Elevated cortisol levels caused by stress can affect activity. Matures in early years of life.

HIPPOCAMPUS

Center of short-term memory; connects emotion of fear to the context in which the threatening event occurs. Elevated cortisol levels caused by stress can affect growth and performance. Matures in early years of life.



For more information, read [Persistent Fear and Anxiety Can Affect Young Children's Learning and Development](#). Illustration by Betsy Hayes.

Please consider sustaining WYN's life-changing youth programs with a gift today!
Every dollar makes a difference. *Thank you.*

[Give Today](#)

